

Pet Birds & Extreme Heat Temperatures

Keep your pet bird cool in hot temperatures with these tips.

By Rebecca Sweat

Courtesy Lori Hancock, Ontario, Canada

Provide your bird with shade, cool water for drinking and bathing, and air circulation to keep it cool in hot temps.

So what's the best way to keep your birds from intense summer temperatures? "Shade, plenty of cool water for drinking and bathing, and air circulation will help keep a bird cool," suggested Missouri veterinarian, Julie Burge, DVM.

If you don't have air conditioning, get a fan for your bird's room to circulate some air movement. This is an absolute necessity if the thermostat in your home reads 85 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. You do not have to direct a fan at the bird; rather place the fan in a window so air will move through the room.

Also make sure your pet birds have a way to get out of direct sunlight. If you keep your birds in outdoor flights or part-time in outdoor play areas, they should have some type of shelter from the sun, either from shade trees or from some type of enclosure over part of the flight. If you keep your parrot near a window inside your house, the cage should be positioned so that the bird can always choose to get out of direct sunlight if it gets too hot. Remember that the sun changes direction during the day and that your bird can get overheated if no shade is available.

Because heat stroke most often occurs in car-bound birds, an obvious step you need to take is to not leave your pet bird in a car, with the windows shut, on a hot afternoon. If you're taking your bird to the veterinarian's during the summer, don't do any other errands before or after your trip to the veterinarian's — unless you're going to the drive-through!

Quick action at home first is important, stressed avian veterinarian Gregory Harrison, DVM. "Unless you're lucky enough to live across the street from a veterinary clinic, you should first give your bird the soapy water treatment at home and then take it to the veterinary clinic," he said. On the other hand if you don't do anything at home and just immediately run out of the door to the emergency clinic 15 minutes away from your house, it may be a half hour by the time your bird gets any treatment. By then it may be dead or have sustained irreparable brain damage.